



## **Pierre Ambroise-Tomas**

(Paris, 15th January 1937 – Meylan, 14th March 2014)



It is my painful duty to inform the passing of our colleague and dear friend Doctor Pierre Ambroise-Tomas (MD 1963; DSc 1969), on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2014, and to pay this active Parasitology professor and committed worker of the Tropical Medicine a last tribute for the great doctor and extraordinary person he was.

Pierre was a honorary professor of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine at the *Faculté de Médecine de Grenoble* (France), former chief of the Parasitology-Mycology Service at the University Hospital Center at the same city, honorary President of the *Académie Nationale de Médecine*, member of the *Académie Nationale de Pharmacie* and *Officier dans l'Ordre de La Légion d'Honneur*.

Pierre was born in Paris on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1937 and began his career in Alger (Algeria – when still a French colony) where he finished his medical studies. There, not only he had his first experiences as a physician in especially difficult conditions – what seemed to foreshadow the professional performance profile he would choose to have for the rest of his life, as he found himself forced to suddenly leave the country in 1962 with his wife, and almost only with the clothes he was wearing and some personal objects. Brave and willful as always, Pierre defended his doctoral dissertation in Lyon the following year.

*Docteur ès Sciences* since 1969, he is nominated to the newly created *Faculté de Médecine de Grenoble* in 1970, where he starts the first Parasitology service, that would become not only a National Reference Center, but, and, overall, a “Cooperative Center of the WHO for Malaria and Parasitic Diseases”. Pierre becomes a professor and develops an international lecturing, research and clinical hospital career. “The true ambassador of French Medicine abroad”, as he was described by Professor André Laurent Parodi, who saluted him in name of the *Académie Nationale de Médecine*, in his greetings. Pierre trained many students, in France (in Grenoble and in many other universities) and in several countries in Europe, Africa and

Asia, having been *Honoris Causa* Professor at the Medicine University of Shanghai, where he lectured for almost 30 years.

His research activities involved mainly Immunology and malaria treatment through therapies combined to artemisinin (ACT), toxoplasmosis and several other parasitic and opportunist mycotic diseases. His works resulted in over 300 articles in indexed journals, 1.000 articles in French journals or communications in international conferences and 14 books (including the volume "The infectious and parasitic diseases" for the Dictionary of the *Académie Nationale de Médecine*).

Such activities and merits granted him the election for the *Académie Nationale de Médecine* (ANM). At first, as a corresponding member in 1987 (a tradition at the academy), then as full member in 1999. He would become its President in 2008. At the ANM, his work involved especially medical practice in hospitals and presiding the "Medical Exercise in Public Hospitals and in University Hospitals" commission. Great defender of Medicine and general practitioners, he wished to make generalist physicians join the *Académie* as consultative members, believing their field experience would be enriching for the Academy. Pierre led a workgroup this way.

Pierre Ambroise-Thomas contributed in many high level administrative and political actions, both in national as international levels, as the Pharmacy and Drugs Directory (French organ equivalent to USA's FDA) and Presidency of the *Société Française de Patologie Exotique*; and joined the *Conseil National des Universités*, the CNRS and ORSTOM (current IRD) Scientific Councils. Pierre also presided the International Federation for Tropical Medicine, was a member of the Federation of European Societies for Tropical Medicine and of the International Health Council and, WHO expert since 1974, nominated General-Director of the Strategic Technical Advisor Group, in charge of advising the Organization on fighting against neglected tropical diseases.

Always willful to finish the workbench research through fieldwork, Pierre conducted – in over 60 different countries, frequently supported by the WHO – numerous missions about the main parasitic diseases (malaria, amebiasis, schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis).

In Brazil, Pierre joined several events created or organized by us, at Fiocruz: the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> National Meetings on Malaria Research, the 1<sup>st</sup> International Course on Malariology and many editions of the Laveran & Deane Seminar on Malaria, that happens for 18 years at the Itacuruçá Island and from which he was a usual professor. He organized the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Tropical Medicine, in Marseille (France) and, for his indication and committed defense, the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress would happen seven year later in Rio de Janeiro, also through his proposition and support at the *Fondation Internationale Laveran*, the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Malaria and Babesioses. As proposed by the Academician Jose Rodrigues Coura, Ambroise-Thomas became, in 2009, Honorary Foreign Member of the Brazilian National Academy of Medicine, ceremony in which he insisted to join in a tuxedo, according to the protocol for Brazilian academicians.

Pierre leaves his beloved wife Colette, 7 children and 16 grandchildren.

Here I resume, once and finally, Professor Parodi's saying, for sharing his opinion. Pierre Ambroise-Thomas was "... a man of faith: faith in his mission... faith in his great family, of which he was so proud and did him so well... faith in friendship, to which he was faithful in all circumstances... and deep religious faith... that he practiced with equal conviction and discretion".

*Claudio Tadeu Daniel-Ribeiro*  
President of the International Federation of Tropical Medicine